

IN THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 **1.** A method, comprising the steps of:
- 2 forming a first layer over a first and second side of a substrate;
- 3 removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second
- 4 side of the substrate; and
- 5 forming device features on the first side of the substrate.
- 1 **2.** The method of claim 1, wherein:
- 2 forming the first layer comprises depositing a layer of silicon nitride.
- 1 **3.** The method of claim 2, wherein:
- 2 removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second
- 3 side of the substrate includes wet chemically etching with phosphoric acid.
- 1 **4.** The method of claim 2, wherein:
- 2 the layer of silicon nitride has a thickness of less than 3,000 Å.
- 1 **5.** The method of claim 1, wherein:
- 2 removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second side of the
- 3 substrate includes isotropically etching.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein:

2 forming device features includes polishing a dielectric layer.

1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein:

polishing the dielectric layer includes chemical-mechanical polishing a shallow trench dielectric layer.

1 **8.** The method of claim 1, further including:

2 removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the first side
3 of the substrate.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein:

2 removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the first side
3 of the substrate includes forming a shallow trench isolation etch mask.

1 **10.** The method of claim 1, further including:

2 forming a second layer over the first side of the substrate; and

3 removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second
4 side of the substrate includes etching with a high degree of selectivity between
5 the first layer and the second layer.

- 1 **11.** The method of claim 10, wherein:
- 2 the second layer comprises silicon dioxide; and
- 3 the first layer comprises silicon nitride.

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1 12. A method, comprising the steps of:
2 forming a first layer that includes a first part formed over a first
3 substrate side and a second part formed over a second substrate side;
4 forming a second layer over the first part;
5 removing at least a portion of the second part; and
6 forming features on the first substrate side.

1 13. The method of claim 12, further including:
2 patterning the first part before forming the second layer.

1 14. The method of claim 12, wherein:
2 removing at least a portion of the second part includes etching
3 essentially all of the second part.

1 15. The method of claim 14, further including:
2 the second layer serves as an etch mask to prevent etching of the first
3 part.

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1 **16.** A shallow trench isolation (STI) method, comprising the steps of:
2 forming a trench etch mask layer over a first and second substrate side;
3 and
4 removing at least a portion of the trench etch mask layer that is formed
5 over the second substrate side.

1 **17.** The STI method of claim 16, wherein:
2 forming a trench etch mask includes depositing a layer silicon nitride
3 over the first and second substrate sides.

1 **18.** The STI method of claim 16, further including:
2 patterning the trench etch mask layer formed over the first substrate
3 side and forming a trench dielectric over the first substrate side.

1 **19.** The STI method of claim 18, further including:
2 etching a substrate to form trenches with the patterned trench etch
3 mask layer as an etch mask.

1 **20.** The STI method of claim 18, further including:
2 chemical-mechanical polishing the trench dielectric.